Nature Notes



News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • October/November/December 2013

TraditionsOpening weekend

eer season opens on Saturday November 16, 2013. For some it's just another day, but to a deer hunter it's Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthdays and the 4th of July all rolled into one.

Dad would start to get excited about hunting in September and began the weekend treks to his boyhood home in Clark County Missouri starting in October. He would get out his bow, a re-curve, and begin practicing in the back yard. If we went outside he would always offer us the opportunity to have a go at it. Needless to say, it was hard to pull. Then the hunting started with fall turkey season. As turkeys got more plentiful in Clark County, Dad became more successful. Often, the turkey we had for Thanksgiving was a wild one.

When I was a child the fall was one of the busiest times of year for my family. Until I was about 12, my Dad coached high school basketball, helped with the football team and wished for the month of November so he could deer hunt. Weeks of anticipation, lists, plans, trips tromping through the woods, all coming together for one of the most anticipated days of the year—opening day of the firearms deer season. Growing up in my family, there were only a two other days that held as much importance to us, and those were Christmas and Thanksgiving.

There was also a distinct pecking order of who got to hunt where and with whom. My grandpa had a 250 acre farm with about 40 acres of timber behind his house. That was his hunting place, but he always had space for grandchild to go along. As he got older he didn't wander



Traditional hunting targets: white-tailed deer (above) and wild turkey (below)

far from the truck so he could get back to it and warm up; that strategy worked well for kids, too.

In the late 1970s, my grandpa came upon the opportunity for Dad and his brothers to buy 90 acres of timber; that may have been the best present my Dad ever bought himself. From then on, it was to "the 90" we went for all of the hunting and everybody that wanted to hunt got to hunt.

Our family group of six suddenly grew with the addition of a couple of Dad's buddies, their sons, daughters and sometimes their wives. Not all of them hunted, but the social aspect was a huge pull for all of us to head north for that weekend. Then there was the food! Grandma was an awesome cook—not a fancy cook, but you never walked away from her table hungry, and if you were lucky she would make homemade

noodles while we were there.

On opening morning we would all wait in anticipation of sunrise, look for any movement besides that of our feet freezing or the shivers, hoping today would be the day. Being the first to shoot a deer had its place of honor as well.

As I grew older, these weekends became just as important to me as well. My focus changed from going out to hunt or sit and wait with Dad or Mom in the woods to one of protecting the resource from illegal hunting methods and insuring safety among hunters, but there is still a deer camp in Clark County and my Dad can't wait for opening morning.

—Marsha Jones, Adair County Conservation Agent



All Missouri Department of Conservation Offices will be closed for the following holidays: Columbus Day-October 14, 2013 Veteran's Day-November 11, 2013 Thanksgiving-November 28, 2013 Christmas-December 25, 2013

Northeast Regional Office and Interpretive Center

3500 S. Baltimore, Kirksville, MO 63501 • mdc.mo.gov/node/279



The Northeast Regional Office and Interpretive Center is located just south of Kirksville on Hwy 63. Come inside to enjoy exhibits, attend programs, purchase permits, and pick up free conservation brochures. Head outside to walk the habitat trail or fish in the stocked pond.

HOURS

Building: Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM Trail and Pond: Daily, 4 AM-10 PM

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM

Programs are free. Call 660-785-2420 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

October Events

Knee High Naturalists ScAVENGERS!

October 7 • Monday • 10:30–11:30

No registration required (ages 3-6) Would you leave old, rotten food sitting around your house? Of course not, you take it out to the trash. But does nature have a trash truck? No, even better than that-it has the ScAVENGERS! Visit us and learn how they keep nature clean!

Creature Feature ScAVENGERS!

October 9 • Wednesday 3:30–4:30 PM

No registration required (ages 7-12) Would you leave old, rotten food sitting around your house? Of course not, you take it out to the trash. But does nature have a trash truck? No, even better than that-it has the ScAVENGERS! Visit us and learn how they keep nature clean!

Conservation Keepers Armored Adventures

October 19 • Saturday • 1–2 PM No registration required (all ages)
Strange armored creatures have found a home in Missouri, and warmer winters could bring more of them into our part of the state. Learn about these unique animals and discover how we can track their population.

Knee High Naturalists Spider Safari

October 21 • Monday 10:30–11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 3-6) Come along as we hunt for clues to tell us about the life of a spider! We'll



discover their amazing abilities while we take a close-up look at a real spider. A spider craft will complete our creepy, crawly program.

Creature Feature Spider Safari

October 30 • Wednesday • 7–8 PM No registration required (ages 7-12) Join us for an evening adventure discovering spiders. We'll meet in the classroom to learn about the amazing abilities spiders have. We'll also practice some spider-hunting techniques before heading outside to put our new skills to the test!



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November Events

Knee High Naturalists Goodnight, Wake up!

November 4 • Monday 10:30-11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 3-6) You may like to sleep at night and get up in the morning, but some animals wouldn't like that much. They would rather sleep in the day and wake up when it gets dark! Discover which Missouri animals are nocturnal and how they have adapted to life in the dark with us.

Creature Feature Armored Adventures

November 13 • Wednesday 3:30-4:30 PM

No registration required (ages 7-12) Strange armored creatures have found a home in Missouri, and warmer winters could bring them into our part of the state. Learn about these unique animals and discover how we can track their population.

Knee High Naturalists Armored Adventures

November 18 • Monday 10:30-11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 3-6) Strange armored creatures have found a home in Missouri, and warmer winters could bring them into our part of the



state. Come discover more about these unique animals!

Conservation Keepers Gobble, Gobble

November 23 • Saturday • 1–2 PM No registration required (all ages) Late November often brings to mind thoughts of Thanksgiving and turkey dinner. Many families make wild turkey an important part of their fall celebrations. Join us to learn the success story of wild turkey conservation..

December Events

Knee High Naturalists Reptiles Rock!

December 2 • Monday 10:30-11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 3-6) They might slither and hiss, or snap and hide in their shell, or even leave their wriggling tail behind them, but they all have some things in common. Not only are we going to learn all about them, we'll meet some real reptiles!

Creature Feature Whoo Am I?

December 4 • Wednesday 3:30-4:30 PM

No registration required (ages 7-12) Their amazing eyesight, specialized hearing, and silent flight make these birds very successful nocturnal predators. Let's take a close look at the features that make the owl such a special bird!

Nature Craft Night

December 11 • Wednesday • 6-8 PM Register by December 6 (all ages) It's time for our annual holiday nature crafting event! Bring your family to make ornaments, decorations, and bird feeders out of a variety of natural items. Registration begins November 12.

Knee High Naturalists Whoo Am I?

December 16 • Monday 10:30-11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 3-6) Their amazing eyesight, specialized hearing, and silent flight make these birds very successful nocturnal predators. Let's take a close look at the features that make the owl such a special bird!

Creature Feature How's It Flowing?

December 18 • Wednesday 3:30-4:30 PM

No registration required (ages 7-12) How does a lake get filled with water? Where do the rivers go? What about the water we use at home? Learn how water moves through habitats and communities with us as we explore the water cycle!

Conservation Keepers Capturing Nature

December 21 • Saturday • 1–2 PM No registration required (all ages) Using a camera to capture your favorite scenes and moments in nature can be as simple as aiming and pushing a button. We're going to explore some of the tips and techniques that can help you grab the best pictures.



Hunter Education

mdc.mo.gov/node/3722



These free courses are required for anyone born on or after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. Students ages 11 and up must pass a test at the end of the course to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. If you have any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permits, or a Missouri Conservation Heritage Card, bring them to class. Registration for classes and a complete course listing can be found online.

Location Classroom Sessions	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Edina 1st Christian Church Basement, Edina, MO	October 15, 2013	6:00 - 10:00 PM
Kahoka Christian Church, Kahoka, MO	October 19, 2013	8:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Skills Sessions Central Christian College of the Bible, Moberly, MO	October 2, 2013	6:00 - 8:00 PM
MDC Northeast Regional Office, Kirksville, MO	October 5, 2013	8:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Shelbina Carnegie Library, Shelbina, MO	October 5, 2013	8:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Edina 1st Christian Church, Edina, MO	October 17, 2013	6:00 - 10:00 PM
Kahoka Christian Church, Kahoka, MO	October 19, 2013	1:00 - 5:00 PM
North Mercer School, Mercer, MO	October 19, 2013	1:00 - 5:00 PM
Jamesport Fire & Rescue, Jamesport, MO	October 20, 2013	1:00 - 5:00 PM
KCP&L Community Room, 1208 E. 17th, Trenton , MO	October 22, 2013	5:30 - 9:30 PM
Paris High School, Paris, MO	October 26, 2013	8:00 AM - 12:00 noon
American Legion Post, Palmyra, MO	November 2, 2013	8:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Mark Twain Lake, M.W. Boudreaux Memorial Visitor's Center, Perry, MO	November 9, 2013	12:30 - 4:00 PM

Educator's Corner

mdc.mo.gov/node/92

What is a Discovery Trunk?

Each Discovery Trunk is filled with a wide variety of items chosen for you to immediately implement into your nature study unit. The contents of each trunk include items such as children's books, field ID guides, puppets, videos, posters, and other items specific to the theme of the trunk. A binder of background information with lesson plans and activities is also included in each trunk. These are designed for use by early childhood through secondary classrooms. Trunk themes include mammals, insects, fish, birds, caves, and more! The Discovery Trunks can be checked out for up to two weeks, so call your local MDC office and reserve yours today!

Fun and Free

Stop by the MDC Northeast Regional Office in Kirksville during office hours to check out a Discover Nature backpack. These backpacks give you a self-guided tour of the natural world as you walk the habitat trail.

Backpacks can be checked out at the front desk. Each backpack is loaded with tools and information to enhance your experience, from magnifiers and measuring tapes to field guides and a nature journal.



Waterfowl Hunting

The sun rises over the bare trees in the frosted air of an October morning. A splash is heard as three green-winged teal and two blue-winged teal abruptly land into the rust colored water that has been force-flooded into the timber. The five ducks call out to one another in high pitched quacks, caws, and chirps that seem to have their own rhythm. A young boy, dressed from head to toe in wetland and forest camouflage so as to blend into his surroundings, lifts up a long-barreled shotgun that is also completely camouflaged. He takes in a deep breath, inhaling the bitter cold air, letting out half a breath of steam. An angry blast, like a quick whack to

a kettle drum, breaks the silence. The ducks scatter in confusion and panic, quacking loudly and rapidly. All but two, at least; one shot belongs to the boy, me, and the other to my younger sister.

This was a major stepping stone in my life. This is where I began to love hunting game animals. When I was younger, between the ages of 11 and 14, I feared firearms and how they worked, as well as being unsure of myself when it came to shooting a firearm. I also was not convinced at the time that I'd enjoy hunting or taking an animal's life. But as I grew up, hunting taught me to believe in myself, to be confident, and to respect wildlife.

-Colby Jones



A family that recently moved to Missouri asked me about trout fishing in our state. Do we have trout in Missouri, and if so, where are they?

Trout fishing is very popular, but trout are not native to Missouri. In order to meet the demand, Missouri stocks brown and rainbow trout in rivers and lakes throughout the state. Rainbow trout have also established breeding populations in some areas of the state.

Missouri has four trout hatcheries-Maramec, Bennett Springs, Montauk, and Table Rock. These hatcheries provide trout for stocking statewide, including Spur Pond in Kirksville.

If you don't want to travel to find trout, winter fishing at Spur Pond is your best option. It is stocked every fall with 1400 trout. Just remember to get your trout permit!

Another recent question asked about the best way to handle bees and wasps that are buzzing around or even landing on us.

The most important thing to remember in these situations is to stay calm. If you are near a nest or food source, it's best to move to a different location. They are often attracted by sweet smells and bright colors, also.

You can visit http://extension. missouri.edu/p/g7391 for more information about the bees and wasps you might encounter in Missouri and how to prevent stings.



Northeast Nature Notes is available by mail, e-mail, and on the MDC website.

To be added to the mail or e-mail registry, or to switch from one to the other, please contact Amanda Moore at amanda.moore@mdc.mo.gov or call 660-785-2420.

The online version of the newsletter is available at mdc. mo.gov/node/17875.

A full event calendar for the Northeast region is also available on the MDC website.

Elijah's First Deer

The Murphy Family doesn't seem to do anything unless it's overly dramatic. Such was the first Monday of firearms deer season in 2011 for myself and my son Elijah, who at the time was 11 years old. With waning shooting light, we were discussing leaving the comfort of our ground blind and heading home when I glanced out a window and saw a robust, two year old buck cruising towards our stand.

As I was coaching Elijah, the cruising deer stopped at 22 yards. He had heard our commotion and was on "def con red". When I told Elijah to shoot, I witnessed him flinch hard enough to almost shear the trigger assembly clean apart! He had forgotten to take the safety off.

The rutting beast remained motionless. With a loud, metallic slam, we released the safety. I whispered to my son, "put it on his shoulder, and squeeze." The .44 carbine barked, sending the buck whirling in a 180 degree explosion of hair, horn, and mud. I witnessed the buck cross a creek and run a short distance until I lost sight of him.

Elijah and I gave the deer a solid 20 minutes before we looked for spoor at the scene; yet we find nothing. We cross the creek where the deer did the same, and we find no hair, nor blood. I'm trying to stay upbeat, but our disappointment is palpable.

I take Elijah home and come back



Elijah's first deer will be a lasting memory for the Murphy family

with better lights and a lantern. I look for another fruitless hour. Several things are silently perplexing me. "How do you shoot a 140lb deer anywhere with a 240gr. bullet and get nothing...unless you miss...and how do you miss at 22yds.?"

With the "miss" nagging at me, I have to leave for responsibilities with the local fire department, which included a wildfire call. I roll into bed at 1:30 a.m. the following morning. At 6:20 a.m. I get the boys up so that we can run our trap line prior to school.

A cold rain greets us, and only enhances our somber mood. After I drop the boys off at home, my first pot of coffee kicks in and fuels my restlessness from the previous nights. I grab my ATV and decide to go back for a "body search"; my prayer is, "Lord, if he hit him, let me find him."

With still no sign, I again follow the last route I saw the running buck, thinking to myself, "If I was a deer with a ½" hole in my vitals, where would I go?" I crouch down and take a side trail through a bottomland old field that was choked with Reed's canarygrass. 40 yards down the trail lay Elijah's deer. He had large entry wound, but a steep angle of trajectory had prevented an exit and a good blood trail. I can't tell you how excited that boy and his dad were that morning!

-John Murphy, Private Land Conservationist



Share the Harvest

If you plan to hunt this fall but don't want or need to keep the meat from your deer, consider participating in Share the Harvest. The Share the Harvest program helps hunters share their deer meat with families in need.

Participating in Share the Harvest is easy-just take your deer to an approved meat processor and let them know how much meat you wish to donate. When a whole deer is donated, there are options for reduced and sometimes even free processing. Just check with the processor to find out what options are available in your area.



Nature Craft Night

Wednesday, December 11, 2013 6:00-8:00 PM **MDC Northeast Regional Office**

It's time for our annual evening of holiday crafts. A wide variety of natural items will be available to make into tree ornaments, gifts, or bird feeders, so bring your family to enjoy this night out together.

Registration for this free family event runs from 8 AM on November 12 to 5 PM on December 6. Space and supplies are limited, so call Karen at 660-785-2420 to add your group to the list!



discover nature programs ...

- · Help Missourians discover and explore nature
- · Provide expert instruction and hands-on activities
- Are available statewide



Serving nature and you



What's New with MDC?

Statewide

Find the best locations for fall colors with the Missouri Department of Conservation's enhanced fall color app for smart phones and other devices. The fishing app has also been enhanced. You can get more information and download the apps by visiting http://mdc.mo.gov/node/23855.

Northeast

Check out the new and improved Smokey Bear greeting visitors on the habitat trail at the Northeast Regional Office! This life-size display replaces the previous Smokey, which suffered weather damage that made it prone to tipping over. The new Smokey is colorful and durable, and will welcome visitors for many years to come.

Inside the Northeast Regional Office, you'll find an improved aquarium and a new albino deer mount. The aquarium's rocky display background has been removed, giving the fish more room to move around and brightening up the space. The albino deer has inspired many curious questions! They aren't very common, but they fall under the same hunting regulations as other deer.

Places to Go - Spur Pond

Spur Pond on Osteopathy Street in Kirksville is owned and maintained by the city. It is home to healthy populations of bass, catfish, and sunfish, and is stocked each fall with trout.

From November 1 through January 31, catch and release trout fishing is available at Spur Pond. The rest of the year, anglers may catch and keep up to 4 trout. Most trout are caught by late winter and early spring, so make sure to get your fishing in early!

Spur Pond also offers a fish cleaning station and floating fishing dock. The water pump for the cleaning station is removed in the winter to prevent freezing.

